

An Address Presented to the Reverend and Learned Ministers of the Church of England, by one sincerely desirous of finding out the Truth, in behalf of himself and others equally concern'd, as well for their own as the general Satisfaction.

THERE can be no doubt, but that the main Concern of Man in this Vale of Tears, is the Salvation of his Soul. If this be lost, he loses all; if this be gained, he gains all, and both for an Eternity. No body then can blame me, if being solicitous to save my Soul, I have recourse to those, whose Learning must needs enable them, and whose Charity cannot but incline them to instruct me in this weighty Affair. I therefore humbly beseech you most Reverend and Learned Doctors of the Church of England to afford me a clear and satisfactory Solution of these following Doubts.

First, I desire to know, whether all things necessary to Salvation are contained in Scripture? If not, where must I seek them? If they be, then they are either clearly contained in it, so that there is no need of an Interpreter for the meaning of the words; or not. If there be no need of any such Interpreter, then I humbly ask what these Necessaries to Salvation are, and in what Chapter and Verse of Scripture each of them may be found. For Example; Is the Belief of a Trinity, One God and Three Persons, necessary to Salvation? If it be, as the Creed of S. Athanasius assures us it is, in what Chapter and Verse of Scripture is it clearly expressed? If you send me to the 1 Epist. of S. John, Chap. 5. Ver. 7. where we read, *There are Three who give Testimony in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and Holy Ghost, and these Three are One*; or to the Gospel of S. John, Chap. 10. Ver. 30. *I and my Father are One*; I desire you to shew clearly out of Scripture, that the word *One* here

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signifies a strict *Identity* or Unity of Substance, as the Church of *England* holds, not a meer Moral Union, as many Learned *Arians* and others will have it, and as we all confels the same word signifies in *S. John*, Chap. 17. Ver. 21. where our Lord Prays that all Believers may be *One*; as he and his Father are *One*; where certainly he cannot be supposed to mean *One* in Substance. In what Verse then and Chapter in Scripture have we these or the like words, The word *One* in the *Epist. of S. John*, Item in *S. John's Gospel*, signifies a strict Identity; which notwithstanding I conceive ought to be, if all Necessaries to Salvation be clearly contained in Scripture. Now if the Belief of a *Trinity* be not necessary to Salvation, I desire it may be clearly owned in these or the like words: *'Tis not necessary for Salvation to believe Three Persons and One God, notwithstanding the Creed of S. Athanasius, and Definition of the First Council of Nice, when the Church was in her Purity not the least corrupted.*

Again, Is the Belief of the *Incarnation* necessary for Salvation? Where is it clearly expressed in Scripture? You refer me to *S. John* Chap. 1. *The Word is made Flesh*. But you know that many Learned Men, *Nestorians* and others, denied that word to signify a strict Incarnation, but either a Moral Union, or a meer external appearance of a *Deity*, as these who held *Christ* not to have a real but a phantastick Body. Now be pleased to shew me in what Verse or Chapter it is clearly expressed, that the said words signify a strict Incarnation. But if you deny the Belief of this Mystery to be necessary to Salvation, own it, for our Satisfaction, in these or the like words: *It is not necessary for Salvation to believe, that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity was made true Man.* And if the Belief of neither *Trinity* nor *Incarnation* are necessary, shew me what is, and where expressed in Scripture.

Then in order to Practice, I desire to know whether it be necessary to Salvation, to keep holy the *Lord's Day*, that is, *Sunday* and not *Saturday*. If it be, I desire to know in what Chapter and Verse it is clearly contained in Scripture; as also where the Abrogation of the *Sabbath* is clearly expressed. If it be not necessary for Salvation to keep holy the *Lord's Day*, I desire your Warrant for it in these or the like terms: *It is not necessary to keep holy the Lord's Day, that is, Sunday.*

If you say that every one is only bound to believe what is clear to him in Scripture, reading it with Sincerity and Humility, then I must desire to know, What if I reading Scripture Sincerely and with Humility, cannot find clearly expressed either the *Trinity* or *Incarnation*?

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will it not be necessary for the Salvation of my Soul to believe these two Mysteries ?

Put the Case I have recourse (as by these I have) to *Church-Guides*, and they tell me I must believe those Mysteries : is it necessary I believe these Guides ? If it be, then Scripture alone is not clear in Necessaries to Salvation ; for here I am obliged to believe what is not clear to me in Scripture. Again, am I bound to keep holy *Sunday*, tho I find no Precept for it in Scripture, and not *Saturday*, tho I find an express Command for it, no where Abrogated in Scripture, because my *Guides* tell me I must do so ? If I must, then *Guides* are necessary to Salvation, and Scripture alone without them is not sufficient. Be pleased to own this Proposition—*Scripture alone is not sufficient, without Guides to Interpret it.* If notwithstanding my *Guides* I am not bound to believe either *Trinity* or *Incarnation*, or observe *Sunday*, then I must beg of you to warrant with your Authority these words : *I am not bound to keep holy the Lord's-Day or Sunday, tho the Guides of the Church tell me I must, if I cannot find it clearly in Scripture.*

But you'll tell me, That Necessaries to Salvation are either clear in Scripture, or evidently deduced out of Scripture. Very well. Assign then these Necessaries, and deduce them out of Scripture ; shew the Verse and Chapter from whence is evidently deduced an Obligation to keep holy *Sunday* and not *Saturday*. Again, the Evidence of that Deduction is either had immediately from the meer reading of Scripture, without help of *Guides*, and then I desire to see the Places from whence these Necessaries are evidently inferr'd ; or it cannot be had but by the help of *Guides*, and then the Scripture alone is not sufficient.

Secondly, But if all Necessaries to Salvation be not clear enough in Scripture to be understood without an Interpreter, then it will be necessary to know who and where the Interpreter is. If you remit me to the Decision of the true Church, it will be necessary to know which is that Church. If you tell me all Christian Churches joyned together, then it follows that I am bound to believe nothing but what all Christians agree in ; for what they disagree in, cannot be the Sentiment or Decision of the whole Church, but only of a part of it. I am not then obliged to believe the *Trinity* ; for the *Arians*, tho Christians, deny it. I am not obliged to believe the *Incarnation*, for many Christians deny that Christ was God made Man by a strict Incarnation, but only by a Moral Union ; that is, he was a Man who had the Authority of God as his Plenipotentiary, and the like. Now then let me know

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on what all Christians agree, and let me have your Warrant that I am bound to believe neither the *Trinity* nor *Incarnation*, nor any thing wherein all Christians do not agree. Now if you tell me I am obliged to stand to the Determination of one particular Church, or some and not all, tell me which, and why that or those more than others? What Church, for Example, were particular Persons bound to follow Two hundred years ago, before the *Reformation*?

I conceive, an Answer to these Doubts absolutely necessary for the Salvation of my Soul. For how can I be Saved, if I know not what is necessary thereunto? I need not say a satisfactory one, for no other can flow from your Learned and vertuous Pens; I only fear that some Pin-feather'd Divine, out of an itch to appear in Print may prevent yours, and put me off with a Flim-flam, or an uncharitable Jeer, or Railing against some particular Church he may fancy me to be of, which is nothing to my purpose, who seek where I may find securely Necessaries to Salvation, not where I cannot find them. This would be also prejudicial to the Church of *England*; for when Men see Doubts so sincerely and submissively Proposed, Answered only with Jeers, Railing and Invectives, or omitted and let pass, as not deserving an Answer, they must needs doubt of the Learning, as well as of the Vertue and Charity of their Leaders.

Now were the Satisfaction I here desire, intended for my self alone, it might have seemed more proper to have made my Address in particular to some one of your Reverend and Learned Body; but forasmuch as it concerns so many others, and, as I persuade my self, will prove extremely beneficial to Religion, it being the surest, nay only way to end the many Controversies of this Age, I am forced to desire of you, whose high Character obliges you to a Zeal of Souls, a publick, and withall a speedy Answer, by which you will highly oblige,

S I R S,

Yours ever.

L O N D O N, Printed for Randal Taylor, 1688.